

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED

"HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

No. 247. NEW SERIES. SATURDAY, AUGUST 23, 1873. PRICE TWOPENCE.

YOUNG MR. NIGHTINGALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HOBSON'S CHOICE," &c.

CHAPTER XXVII. A LAWYER'S OFFICE.

NOT that my dinner was by any means a good one; it was, indeed, detestable: raw, greasy, gristly, and half cold. But I was very hungry. On the journey my appetite had lain in abeyance; I had scarcely touched the abundant packet of provisions my mother had supplied me with. I had only applied to my flask once, when the dust of the road had become unendurably choking. But I was now prepared to devour almost anything; which was fortunate, as it happened. I even emptied a small decanter of sherry, a curious compound, in which fire and acidity struggled for ascendancy, both, with good reason, claiming the victory. The pimpled waiter eyed me inquiringly, but rather with amused contempt than with genuine sympathy, I suspect, as I drained my glass. Possibly he was expecting me to fall mortally stricken by the unwholesome draught, and desired to witness that catastrophe. I survived, however. I was "a regular yokel." And I had the supreme digestive powers of youth.

The "boots" of the Golden Cross, upon my summons, relieved me of my boots, chalking the number of my room upon their solid soles, and equipped me with slippers of enormous dimensions. It was a gymnastic and terpsichorean feat, mounting the stairs to bed and retaining these vast receptacles upon my feet. Often I was wrecked from them, as it were, and had much difficulty in getting aboard them again. While I was thus engaged I encountered a laughing chambermaid. It was to conceal her mirthfulness, perhaps, that she proffered me "a pan of coals" for my

bed. I declined the proposition, but vaguely comprehending it.

I slept very soundly, losing consciousness almost immediately after I had extinguished my candle, and groped my way to my massive mausoleum of a bedstead. It creaked and groaned ominously as I entered it. Then I sunk deep into a feather bed, as into a mound of newly-turned earth. A sense of dampness, a smell of mouldiness, a feeling that the sheets were of an unaccustomed material and texture, and then—I was asleep.

I awoke early. There was much noise. The rattle and patter of harness and hoofs, the hissing of ostlers, the thunderous rumbling of an early coach passing beneath the archway of the inn, a babel of voices. It was daylight. I tried to open the window, but it resisted all my efforts. I doubt if it ever had been, or could be, opened.

After breakfast, under the supervision of the pimpled waiter, who looked more pimpled than ever by daylight, perhaps owing to his very sallow complexion, I sallied forth. The waiter had besought me to order dinner, but I declined to commit myself to that proceeding. He was not very civil. And washing would no doubt have benefited his appearance. And if he had brushed his threadbare black coat he would perhaps have looked rather more tidy, or less slovenly.

I bought a map of London, and felt then fortified on the subject of losing my way, or incurring danger, possibly suffering death even for mysterious surgical purposes. I had been much exercised for some time past by considerations of that sort. And I had my hair cut. I had observed that my locks were longer and more straggling than appeared to be the fashion of town.

"From the country, sir, I should say?" remarked the hairdresser. "I thought so. They've always such a knife-and-fork way of cutting 'air in the country. I can always tell by a gent's 'ead where he's 'ad his 'air cut. You'll excuse me, sir. We'll soon get it in nice order for you. Wonderful thick you hair grows to be sure, sir. But it's too dry. Likely to come off in patches by 'andfuls, I should say, before long. Dear me! They must have cut it with a chopper or a sickle where you come from, sir."

I blushed. The Purrington barber was rather a rude practitioner. Besides operating on human hair, he was in the habit of clipping horses, at times, even, of trimming and shearing sheep. But I came to the conclusion that the Londoners were not very respectful, and were unpleasantly inclined to personal criticism.

I felt, however, that I left the hairdresser's hand with a smartened aspect. I wished all the same that the pomatum with which he had anointed me had been less powerfully odorous. Throughout the day I was conscious, especially whenever I removed my hat, of a sort of atmosphere of greasy scent attending me whithersoever I went. I was inconvenienced, moreover, by the weight in my pocket of a heavy jar of the same unguent, of which I had become possessed upon the urgent invitation of the hairdresser. He had besought me, indeed, to expend quite a small fortune in the acquirement of a selection from his wares. I had evaded his solicitations, I thought, rather cleverly by saying that I would try the pomatum first, and if I found that fulfil his account of it, I would certainly return to make further purchases. He could hardly contest this view of the case, without manifesting inconvenient distrust of the virtues of the commodity he had so commended to my notice.

With some difficulty I found my way to Golden-square. Mr. Monck's house had but a side view of the enclosure, and could only by courtesy be described as pertaining to the quadrangle. On this account, perhaps, the letter A was added to its number, proclaiming it an appendage in the nature of a redundancy. The name of "Monck" was inscribed in large letters upon a tarnished door-plate. A smaller plate fixed above a bell-handle in the door-post bore the word "Office." The house was of considerable size, and boasted a certain respectability of aspect, in spite of its exceeding dinginess. It seemed encrusted with soot, its window-panes clouded with dust, its iron

railings rusty, its woodwork almost bare of paint. The door was spotted with blisters, and was shedding its outer skin in strips and patches. I pulled the bell. The knocker I found to be secured by an iron staple. There was the clicking sound of wirework moved by a sluggish spring, and then, the door swung slowly open by invisible agency. I stood alone in a narrow feebly-lighted hall or passage. Then I observed, in large letters upon a black board nailed against the wall, "Please to shut the door." I obeyed this direction.

After a moment's hesitation I proceeded along the passage, and, passing two doors, each marked "Private," arrived at a third, bearing upon it the word "Office." I knocked.

"Come in," cried a loud voice.

I entered a spacious room built out at the back of the house, and lighted by a skylight.

"Is Mr. Monck in?" I inquired.

There was but one person in the room, an elderly man, with iron-grey hair, combed into a peak on the top of his forehead, and projecting thence like the horn of a unicorn. He was sitting on a high stool, writing at a desk with brass rods rising above it for the support of books and papers. He thus surveyed me through a frame, as it were, or from a window.

"In one moment," he said. And he continued to write.

I glanced round the room. It was very bare of furniture, and the ceiling was black with smoke. A little stove stood in one corner with a long funnel springing from it, taking zigzag forms, and then suddenly darting through the wall. The uncarpeted floor was much blotched with ink, and very gritty to walk upon. I have known smoother gravel paths. There were other desks and stools, a pile of tin boxes, a deal press, with pigeon-holes and shelves, crowded with discoloured papers and books, and an iron safe, painted green, with a brass handle. Tattered, fly-spotted almanacks, notices, and lists hung awry upon the grimy walls. Near the stove was an engraved portrait, in a black frame, of a judge in his wig and robes, but the glass was so dimmed and dusty I could scarcely trace out the design. Suddenly I observed that, while I was taking note of the room and its contents, the man at the desk had ceased to write, and was eyeing me intently. He then solemnly and deliberately took a pinch of snuff from a tin box.

"You wish to see Mr. Monck?"

"Yes."

"Particularly?"

"Well, yes, I may say particularly."

"He's engaged at present."

"Will he be disengaged shortly?"

He looked at a large thick silver watch, extracted from his fob by a steel chain with much effort.

"I can't say I think he'll be disengaged very shortly."

"Had I better call again, or shall I wait?"

He climbed down from his high stool slowly and laboriously, with something of the action of a bear descending its pole, and approached me.

I then perceived that he was of very low stature, and that this was mainly due to the disproportion of his lower limbs. His shoulders were broad and high, his head large, and his arms unusually lengthy, but his legs were so short and unsubstantial that they seemed to be a sort of misfit, and to be at discord with his other members. He shuffled somewhat as he walked, craning his head and bowing outwards his back. He had hard aquiline features, a deeply-lined face, a snuff-stained upper lip, and thick bristling eyebrows, beneath which his sharp grey eyes glittered shrewdly. He spoke with an air of watchful cunning and suspicion, but his manner otherwise was not discourteous. He wore a thread-bare olive-green coat, long in the tails and sleeves, and high in the collar, buttoned across his chest; a brooch adorned his rather soiled shirt-front, and a black silk cravat was loosely wound round his neck. He dispensed with shirt-collars. He carried his tin snuff-box in one hand and held streaming from the other a stringy, faded, yellow silk handkerchief.

"Mr. Monck is engaged," he said. "But perhaps I may be able to do as well. May I ask your business?"

"My name is Nightingale," I began. A curious smile seemed to star his face all over with dints and wrinkles.

"Precisely," he interrupted. "I thought it might be Mr. Nightingale. Take a seat, please." He handed me a battered, wooden-seated chair. "I hope you find yourself quite well, Mr. Nightingale, and have recovered from the fatigues of your journey. From Purrington, I think? I'm from that part of the country myself. I thought, from your way of speaking, if I may be permitted to say so, that you might be young Mr. Nightingale of Purrington. Precisely. We have been expecting you, Mr. Nightingale."

"You know Purrington, Mr. —"

"Vickery, my name is—Mr. Monck's manager. Yes, I know Purrington, but not very well. I was not born there, though not very far from it. I've not been there for many years. But I may say I know Purrington. Lord Overbury has a place there, I think? Precisely. Yes, Overbury Hall. Glad to see you in London, Mr. Nightingale. We'll make you as comfortable as we can. There's no necessity whatever for your troubling yourself about seeing Mr. Monck. We were expecting you. All arrangements have been duly made and settled. And you left your uncle, Mr. Orme, I think, quite well? Precisely."

There was something cat-like, it seemed to me, in his way of eyeing me from under the shadow of his bristling brows. He appeared to watch the effect upon me of all he said, and to be not less heedful as to the nature of his utterances. He was friendly and polite after an old-world fashion, yet there was an air about him of suspicion and craftiness, and almost of mystery. I attributed this to his calling. Connected with the law, doubtless, for many years, he had become the depository of secrets without number, and was bound to maintain strict guard over himself. In the same way he had acquired distrust of others—was influenced by a perpetual fear lest he should be over-reached, and his hidden knowledge brought to light by some adroit manœuvre on the part of his interlocutors. But if he disclosed little he was bent upon learning much. By his ingenious system of questioning me, and of risking statements, and then, finding himself uncontradicted, assuming them to be facts, and treating them as a basis upon which to found further inquiries, he soon possessed himself of all I had to tell, and had arrived at distinct conclusions as to my character and intentions, and generally as to the condition and views of my relatives. Upon my entrance he had affected to be much occupied, but he made no attempt to resume the labours I had seemed to disturb. He stood beside me chatting, as though he had ample time to spare, taking snuff freely, and busily flourishing his handkerchief.

"A wonderful study the law, Mr. Nightingale, as you'll find out for yourself very shortly. Arduous, no doubt, and intricate, and dry—so I've heard people say, but that is not my experience. You're not much acquainted with the subject, yet? No. So I had judged. Not read a single law book,

I dare say. No. It was not to be expected. You're young, you see, and, as you have said, brought up alone in the country—in a solitary farm-house. Precisely. You were not likely to make the science of law one of your studies. Of course not. But you've done well to come direct to London, the head-quarters of law. I am not myself a solicitor; as I said, name of Vickery, Mr. Monck's managing clerk—I pretend to be nothing more—and I wouldn't be thought wanting in respect to country practitioners—very excellent men, many of them, no doubt—but their offices are not a good school. The cream of their business comes to London. Conveyancing they have, of a sort, and assize business, vestry meetings, turnpike trusts, and so on. A confined sphere of action. You were quite right to come to town direct. Your uncle, Mr. Orme—I know the name—was an early friend of Mr. Monck's? Knew him intimately, at one time, I think you said?"

I explained that so far as I was informed my uncle had known Mr. Monck well in times past, how intimately I could not say, but certainly that they had not met for very many years.

"Precisely," Mr. Vickery went on. "That was how I understood the matter. No. They have not met for very many years; of course not. Mr. Orme has had little occasion, happily, for legal assistance. Rarely visits London, probably? Mr. Monck rarely quits it, he is so much engaged. I will see that you are made comfortable here, Mr. Nightingale, and are put into the right way. As Mr. Monck's manager, he being so much engaged, that duty usually devolves upon me. We will have that desk in the corner cleared out for you, Mr. Nightingale; you'll be snug there, out of the draught of the door. You'll soon feel yourself at home. Precisely. All does seem very strange at first. And you're new to London? Your first visit? So I had judged. And you are staying at—"

"At the Golden Cross."

"At the Golden Cross. You'll be glad, no doubt, to move from there as soon as possible. You will take lodgings?"

I said that it was upon that subject I had been enjoined to seek Mr. Monck's counsel.

"Precisely," said Mr. Vickery. Then, after a pause, he resumed: "But perhaps it's hardly necessary to trouble Mr. Monck upon such a matter. Lodgings are easily met with, of all sorts, at all prices. You would wish to be moderate in your expendi-

ture? Precisely. One gentleman articulated here, some years ago now, lived at Islington, but that's rather distant; another, I remember, lodged in Featherstone-buildings, Holborn. That might do, Mr. Nightingale, if you're really without choice. Featherstone-buildings, a central situation, quiet, respectable, comfortable, and not too expensive. I think you might find Featherstone-buildings suit you."

I said I thought so too; never having heard of the place before.

"If it doesn't suit, you can easily make a change; a week's notice is all that's required. You'll be glad to see about the matter at once perhaps? Precisely. And as you're new to London, you may care to look about you a little before taking your seat here. There's much to see in London—especially to a young gentleman visiting town for the first time—very much to see. I am sure of Mr. Monck's concurrence when I say that there need be no hurry about your setting to work in the office. You've five years before you, you know. A day or two is no great matter. You're going? Good morning, Mr. Nightingale. Happy to make your acquaintance. And, if you should happen to be writing home, I am sure you may present Mr. Monck's best remembrances to your uncle, Mr. Orme; say, indeed, anything becoming and respectful of that sort that may occur to you. Good morning!"

So I left Mr. Vickery, taking snuff with grave composure. Long after I had quitted Golden-square, I seemed to feel his scrutinising, suspicious eyes fixed upon me with curious intentness.

HEALTH IN TOWN AND COUNTRY.

THERE is no fact more clearly disclosed by the figures, from time to time published by the Registrar-General, than that the population of towns is rapidly and uniformly increasing, whilst the people of the rural districts are almost stationary, or, in some cases, diminishing in numbers.

Not a few of our readers may imagine, at first sight, that the relative health of town and country has long since passed beyond the field of controversy. There is an impression abroad, that any given person residing in any town has a less chance of health and long life than any other person living in the country. Still more confident is the impression that the occupier of a smart suburban villa has necessarily a

better prospect of surviving to a good old age than his cousin who is doomed (as he may think) to pass most of his nights, as well as days, in the middle of a town.

In so far as the suburban resident may plume himself upon his better location, the interests of truth may compel us to impart to him a few shocks which may seem rude, however gently intended. In so far as the relative health of town and country may be practically inquired into, a broad glance may be usefully cast over the interesting figures at our disposal.

The year 1872 was one of such exceptional good health, especially in London, that it could scarcely be taken as a criterion, even if we had all the figures before us. Lest such figures should lead us into erroneous conclusions arising out of their exceptional character, it is perhaps as well that we cannot get them in full, and that we should be compelled to fall back upon those of 1870, that being the latest year for which the detailed returns have been completely published long enough for careful examination.

In 1870, then, we are told that in towns the mortality was at the rate of 24.7 per thousand, whilst in the country it was only at the rate of 20.6 per thousand. The towns included are London and all the places returned as of the greatest population, descending down to an arbitrary line drawn between the greater and lesser towns. That mode of proceeding seems to imply that the greater the extent and population of a town the unhealthier it must be.

The fact that towns are enormously increasing in population as compared with country districts is one about which there can be no dispute. Whether for good or for evil, it is an incontrovertible fact. The tendency of population thus disclosed is also beyond the power of immediate control. Whatever the tendency may be in the far future, there is no prospect of any check likely to operate very soon. Such being the case, and considering that the increase of towns appears inevitable for a long time to come, if we are to take the above bald figures as conclusive, they are truly deplorable, and the prospect is most gloomy.

If it is to be granted, without further parley, that mortality is excessive in proportion as towns are larger, the continued increase in the magnitude of towns must result in a further increase in the excessive death-rates. We have only to go on as we have done for another century or so, and,

upon that presumption, these islands must be entirely depopulated.

Fortunately, however, for our peace of mind and future prospects, the above figures, taken in conjunction with others from the same source, land us in a curious paradox. The Registrar-General, whilst marshalling his figures so as to exhibit towns at a disadvantage, simultaneously admits that, notwithstanding the increase of towns, mortality is steadily diminishing, in direct defiance of the theory of rural salubrity.

Further investigation proves that a town is not necessarily fatal to health in proportion to its magnitude and population, for, of the very largest towns, London, the largest of all, is by far the healthiest. Its mortality, including all its unhealthiest districts, is very much lighter than that of most of the other greatest towns. Thus, in 1870, the mortality of London was at the rate of 24.1* per thousand against 29.4 at Leeds, 31.2 at Manchester, 31.6 at Bristol, and 39.1 at Liverpool.

We observe that the Registrar-General's summary is too tenderly considerate of the reputation of the most unhealthy places, and by way of qualifying it, combines the unhealthiest districts with the less unhealthy adjoining. Thus, he gives the figures for Bristol, after diluting them with those of Clifton, and Manchester with Salford. In like manner, by running in West Derby with Liverpool, the figures of the latter are plausibly put down at 32.9, whereas they are really 39.1, as before stated.

Furthermore, it comes out that the unhealthiest district of London is a shade healthier than the healthiest sub-district of Liverpool. Unfortunately for the reputation of Chelsea, it is the unhealthiest district of the metropolis, its figures being 28.2 per thousand, whilst the sub-district of St. George, Liverpool, though the healthiest locality of that town, gives us figures of 28.3.

During the same year some of the unhealthiest districts of London were healthier by far than the aggregate of smaller places. For instance, the notorious and despised districts of Bethnal Green, figuring at 24.5, Whitechapel at 25.3, Shoreditch at 25.7, and St. Giles's at 25.9, compare very favourably with the above figures obtained from Leeds, and the other black spots enumerated.

We thus learn that neither the magnitude

* These figures for London are those stated by the Registrar-General, our calculation gives only 23.8.

of a town, nor its density of population, nor the remoteness of its centre from the open country, is any fair clue to its probable health. St. George's, Liverpool, is comparatively a suburb, with a population of only nine thousand, including more than an average of well-to-do people, living in good houses, by no means crowded, and within an evening's stroll of a splendid park, and an entirely rural district. St. Giles's, London, on the contrary, has a population of over fifty-three thousand, with an extreme preponderance of intensely poor creatures, densely packed in cramped-up dwellings, abutting upon lanes and alleys, which are a standing opprobrium to the metropolis, and the terror and eyesore of passers-by. At the same time, this population is so far from country air and rural scenes, that the distance in a straight line between it and the nearest corn-field can only be computed by miles. Those who roughly assume that town life is necessarily unhealthier than suburban and country life, will find it difficult to explain why the death-rate of the Liverpool St. George (28.3) is considerably in excess of the London St. Giles (only 25.9).

It is necessary to remark, with reference to districts and sub-districts of London, and sub-districts of Liverpool and other places, that the primitive figures published do not afford a precisely correct criterion of comparison, on account of the deaths in hospitals and other public institutions. Some districts contain many such institutions, which go to swell the death-rate, and others contain none, so that their primitive returns exhibit a low death-rate which, if adopted without qualification, would deceive. In order to get over this discrepancy, it is necessary to adopt a system of equation, so as to distribute the deaths in institutions according to the average of other deaths in the districts or sub-districts concerned. In all our figures such an equation has been resorted to before stating the rates.

With this proviso, some more minute comparisons will be found interesting and valuable. Amongst the returns which are called into requisition by the Registrar-General in order to show the apparent unhealthiness of towns, figures are derived from many places where the mortality is comparatively appalling. Having ascertained that the average of London is 24.1 per thousand, we find that the sub-district of south-east Leeds exhibits a mortality of 36.2; Ancoats, Manchester, of 36.8; St.

James's, Bristol, of 46.5; and Howard-street, Liverpool, of 47.9; the last-named locality being the unhealthiest in the British Isles.

As the mortality in London is little more than half that of the localities just named and many others, it is a misleading course to lump all the large towns together in one category. What we understand as properly implied by the word "town," is a place where beneficent art has been introduced for the purpose of mitigating, not aggravating, the thousand ills that flesh is heir to. The unhealthiest of the unhealthy places are not so because they are towns, but because they lack all the conditions necessary to render them worthy of the name.

The sub-district of Howard-street, Liverpool, is skirted by an entirely open expanse of country, close to the coast, and having all the advantages of the sea-breezes blowing from the west. The excessive mortality is not owing to density of population, for the whole people of the district only number a little over eighteen thousand. The evidence is conclusively furnished by this case, as compared with St. Giles's, London, that to draw a line between town and country, and to say the former is necessarily unhealthy in proportion to its isolation from open country and fresh air, is delusive.

Additional facts go to show, that a well-ordered town ought to be, and is, healthier than the country. The average mortality in the rural districts is 20.6 per thousand, and the lowest rate of the counties obtains in Huntingdonshire and Westmoreland, which, both alike, figure at 18.7. In contradistinction to that, we turn to Lewisham—certainly not rural—where (after adding a share of hospital deaths) the figures are 19.3, and (with the like proviso) to Hampstead, where they are only 17.8, so that these two London districts are lower than the average of rural districts, and the latter lower than the lowest.

Proceeding to a still more minute inspection, we discover that the mortality in the sub-district of Hanover-square is only at the rate of 16.8; May-fair, 15.5; and St. John, Paddington, 14.8; town figures which put the most boasted rural districts into the shade. Indeed, if we deduct the deaths at institutions which are properly ascribable to adjoining neighbourhoods, the actual mortality is only 12.7 in St. John's, and but 13.1 for the three sub-districts taken together. Their united popu-

lations are close upon seventy thousand, whereas the population of Westmoreland numbers only sixty-five thousand, and Huntingdonshire but fifty-eight thousand. Here, again, we have a marked reversal of the notion that density of population, within reasonable bounds, is inimical to health. Another way of stating it will, perhaps, exhibit this more clearly. The town population of seventy thousand gives us (sinking the institutions) only nine hundred and twenty-one deaths, whilst the county district of only sixty-five thousand in Westmoreland suffers a loss of one thousand two hundred and twelve, and Huntingdonshire, out of fifty-eight thousand people, has to mourn over one thousand and eighty-six fatalities.

A few more comparisons, instituted between districts of the metropolis, prove fatal to the notion that suburban residences necessarily command a superior state of health. The five healthiest suburbs of the metropolis are Hampstead, Lewisham, Hackney, Kensington, and Islington, in the order of their enumeration; the first being put at 17.8 and the last at 22.0. As compared with most other localities they are relatively healthy; but when tested by the figures of the most fortunate sub-districts before mentioned, they lose reputation by the contrast. The returns show that Hampstead is not exceptionally healthy merely because it is a suburb, but because of other conditions. If St. Giles's and Hampstead, remaining in all other respects as they are, were merely transposed in their respective positions, there is reason to believe that the returns would be pretty much the same. Hampstead would then be another central seat of good health adjoining that of Hanover-square, and St. Giles's a disgraceful suburb.

Those who still feel disposed to insist that the comparative good health, for instance, of Hackney (20.6) is owing to the fact that it is a suburb, must be called upon to explain why the district of Greenwich (quite as suburban as Hackney) is unhealthier than Bethnal Green and Whitechapel, and only an inappreciable shade better than St. Giles's. Still more difficult will any one find it to reconcile some of the figures elsewhere with the theory of suburban salubrity. For instance, there is Chelsea, comparatively a suburb, with a mortality of 28.2, whilst no other entire district of the metropolis suffers to the extent of more than 25.9. But the most startling shock to the prevalent suburban theory

proceeds from an examination of the returns of sub-districts still further west. Hence we find that the mortality of Fulham is 28.0, or several degrees unhealthier than St. Giles's; and the sub-district of St. Peter, Hammersmith, proves to be the blackest spot within the metropolitan area, having a mortality of 32.4: and, though we make an exceptional allowance, and deduct half the deaths recorded against it in respect of institutions, even then the mortality comes out at 29.2, and its unenviably notorious position remains unchanged. Some may seek to explain the excessive mortality of South-West London — extending from Westminster to Fulham — to lowness and flatness of the site, but that theory must give way before the remarkably favourable returns from Portsmouth, one of the flattest and lowest sites in England, placed in the midst of very numerous and extensive inlets of the sea, abounding with mud and exhalations apparently inimical to health.

Leamington affords one of many illustrations to be derived from the provinces, that suburbs and rural outskirts everywhere are no better guarantee of salubrity than in the metropolitan district. The recorded mortality at Leamington in 1870 was 18.3, and, if we sink the few hospital deaths as properly assignable to the county at large, the true figures are only 17.7, in a town population of about twenty-three thousand; whereas the mortality in the adjoining truly rural districts is as high as 20.0. It may be remarked that there are many worse rural districts, and though there is no better example of what so considerable a provincial town may be, there is still room for such an improvement there, as to show still more vividly what it ought to be.

All these figures, taken together, and fairly digested, prove the fallacious nature of prevalent ideas concerning suburban versus urban residences. If the City merchant or professional man makes a clean breast of it, and says he lives in a suburb because he likes to do so, we will commend him for his candour, and freely accord to him his right of choice; but if he seeks to justify the expense and loss of time by appealing to considerations of health, there is some ground for suspecting that he is labouring under a popular delusion.

The truth of our position in this respect has been dawning for some years, and has found expression in official comments, where we read that, "while the town mortality is kept down within its old limits, the mortality in the small towns, suburbs

of large towns, and villages, is rapidly increasing." Since those very weighty words were written there has been a marked improvement in the health of large towns, so that the mortality is not only "kept down," but very much reduced, in London especially, beyond all precedent; and, though that may be assigned in some degree to inevitable fluctuations, the official opinion, based upon prolonged observation, is, that a portion of the improvement "is permanent, and is the result of the general awakening to the importance of sanitary measures, which has been so conspicuous in the last few years."

It is important, therefore, to accept the lesson of these experiences, and its teachings are to the effect that the proper course to take towards further improvement in the health of towns is to make them more compact; to abolish as far as possible the crooked streets and higgledy-piggledy courts and alleys, and eccentric plans and buildings, which all add to the difficulty of rendering complete and efficient those sanitary measures which have hitherto proved so beneficial. In contradistinction to such a wise policy, it is a delusion and a snare to seek sanitary improvement by the creation of straggling suburbs. Such a course has seriously increased the difficulty and expense of local management, and the note of warning has already been struck that it is a sanitary mistake, pregnant with a future accumulation of disastrous consequences.

Turning once more from the narrower boundaries of city and suburb to the broader line of demarcation between town and country, we get but a continuation of the same lesson. The rough-and-ready figures of the Registrar-General, which seem so unfavourable to the health of town life, have a growing tendency to re-adjust themselves to the contrary conclusion.

It must be borne in mind that there is a constant flow of population from the rural districts to the towns. The strong, most capable, and most fortunate migrate because they choose to do so, and of such stuff is the energy and prosperity of the nation made. But the weak and less capable, and the unfortunate, are very reluctantly forced away from their native places, and compelled to seek the forlorn hope of existence in strange towns and amid strange scenes. These latter outnumber the former in the proportion of at least a hundred, or perhaps a thousand, to one. In the metropolis they and their

puny children are legion. No one who has had opportunities of judging of the lower strata of the London labour market can doubt that a large proportion of these migrate only to die, or otherwise to drift into slow starvation and a premature grave. This course of events must be constantly operating to diminish the death-rate in the country and to increase it in London and all the largest towns. It is only fair to suggest that the extraordinary mortality at Liverpool is probably owing in a great degree to the constant arrival of waifs and strays of humanity, impelled thither in the indulgence of the vague and vain notion that they may possibly get a free passage to some colony, for which they are less adapted than for their native place, and hence their lack of success, probable starvation, and speedy death.

For causes of this kind, and others of a more complicated character, the broad comparison drawn by the Registrar-General between town and country requires to be modified. If we place a due proportion of the deaths in towns against the country districts whence the real causes have sprung, such a course will go far, if not all the way, towards equalising the rates of mortality in town and country. We are fortified in this suggestion by well-known facts concerning the ravages of virulent diseases in villages. Numerous painful experiences, remembered with a shudder in nearly every rural hamlet, prove that isolation and exposure to "fresh air" affords no guarantee of immunity as compared with towns. There is scarcely a country valley that has not been decimated by visitations of extraordinary epidemic. Consistently with this, the Registrar-General has stated in a recent report that "fever frequently shows the greatest proportional fatality in the small towns and villages, and the present return affords many examples of the truth of this fact."

Finally, there is another element to be taken into account in the comparisons before us. It is not so much where a man lives as how he lives that governs the probabilities of his health and long life. A little reflection upon this will increase the significance of the statement made by the Registrar-General, that the excessive mortality roughly ascribed to towns, as such, is most conspicuous and unsatisfactory in the manufacturing districts, especially in Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire. Here we have a clear admission that the undue proportion of deaths is not

owing to residence in towns, but to the circumstances and habits arising out of particular occupations. This must apply more or less to all towns as well as to those expressly designated as of the manufacturing order. It is almost exclusively in towns that we find persons of both sexes, and often of tender age, employed amongst poisonous ingredients, or engaged in pursuits which are chemically or mechanically prejudicial to health. The exigencies of business and the hurried enterprises which most obtain in large towns, compel thousands to take service, not only in trades of an essentially unhealthy character, but in others under circumstances which render them inimical to personal well-being. Close and badly lighted factories, dilapidated and draughty workshops, dark and dismal warehouses, extremes of heat and cold, crowding and other discomforts of a thousand kinds, hasty and ill-digested meals, and the painful anxieties of thousands out of work through the constant fluctuations of trade, all operate, more especially in towns, to break the spirits, undermine the strength, and destroy the health of many individuals, and to impair the constitution of their children. These things are independent of locality, and will always operate in defiance of town and country, and regardless of the greater or less salubrity of either urban or rural atmospheres.

There was a time when a great city was simply another name for a plague spot, arising out of the ignorance and incapacity of other days in reference to healthful arrangements. But the sanitary problem is now fully solved, and it is proved that the health of the people is simply a question of sanitary wisdom. The health of towns has most marvellously improved during the present century, and the scale is so evenly balanced now that it rather turns than otherwise in favour of the greater salubrity of towns as compared with the country. And it must be so. Arrangements can be made in towns, with a view to systematic sanitary government, which are impossible amongst a scattered population. The consequent advantage is beginning to be fully recognised, and wise perseverance in wholesome works and wholesome discipline promises the most gratifying results. A little more appreciation of the compactness before mentioned, and a bold raid upon the smoke nuisance, will tend more and more towards the time we look forward to, when to live with perfect impunity in the centre of the city which their enter-

prise has helped to raise, shall be the proud boast of the greatest of our manufacturing and merchant princes.

THE OBSERVATIONS OF MONSIEUR CHOSE.

X. THE WHITE MICE.

THERE are mice and mice—but there are no red mice. I laid this down, I may say it without incurring the charge of vanity, in the most successful manner, at one of the early meetings of our club. "Just," I continued, "as there are black, and brown, and grey, and tan dogs; but red, none—except those which the dyers disfigure." Then I drew a comparison between the field-mouse, the mouse that lives in our wainscots, and upon our bread and sugar; and the white mouse, speckless, dainty, and much given to comfortable quarters of cotton-wool. I was much applauded for the deductions I made from the arrangements of Nature in the — to the shallow—unimportant matter of mice. And my proposition, with which I concluded, that our club should be called the White Mice, was carried with two dissentients; and these, I am grieved to say, were my own friend and nominee, Tonnerre, and Patin, my neighbour and grocer.

Patin maintained that mice, whether white or grey, were a predatory tribe. They were thieves, and with all the instincts of thieves, from their noses to their tails; cowardly, with sharp teeth; hungry, and yet industrious only at a flour sack, or in the corner of a cupboard.

Tonnerre was of opinion that they were simply ridiculous creatures, fashioned by Providence, no doubt, for some very sound and sufficient reason; but for a reason still undiscovered by man. Therefore he could not perceive either the wit or the *à propos* of my idea. He could understand the Lions, the Tigers, or the Eagles. At the mention of the noble bird, Patin indulged in a gesture of disapprobation that moved the wrath of the captain.

"Sir!" said he, "when the eagle falls from his eyrie, he falls like a thunderbolt, and your faces grow white behind your counters. What does the rat do? He runs away till the noise is over, and then crawls back—to nibble again. He will plant his teeth in the lips of Cæsar dead; feast while the house is in mourning; but let one in Cæsar's house be well astir, and he is off again, fat with the corruption he has swallowed. Your rats are feasting to-day."

Monsieur Patin retorted: "At least they are respectable rats."

"Respectable!—respectable, to push a claim upon a sick man! Respectable, to plunge their hands in the pockets of one just struck with paralysis! Respectable, to air their millions, and bring out their old liveries and middle-class ostentation, before France in tears! Respectable——"

But here the man of war was stopped. He had forgotten all about the mice, the rats, and the rest of the origin of the discussion, and would have drawn us all into a pretty quarrel, had I not recalled his attention to Rule Ten, which forbade party politics.

The White Mice were drawn together on a patriotic platform. We were essentially a bourgeois club. Our mission was to study the current of events, through a critical period of our beloved country's history; and to keep it clear of the demagogues. We were a band of anti-democrats. We regarded ourselves as superior intelligences, bound, by our very superiority, to do our utmost to save society. Hence we were the White Mice: natural leaders of the commoner tribes, or varieties. It was a rule that members should never be addressed as Monsieur, but always as Mus. In formally referring to, or addressing a member of our patriotic body, he was called "the Honourable Mus." Tonnerre vowed that it was absurd, illogical, and that it laid us open to the shafts of our enemies' ridicule; but he was silenced by an overwhelming vote at a general meeting. I asked him whether we should address one another as "citizen"?

"The first man who addresses me in that way," was his reply, "will have to give me a very good reason for his impertinence. But why not monsieur, as in the ordinary intercourse of gentlemen?"

Captain Tonnerre was a rough soldier, without the smallest imagination, or the faintest idea of the unities, or of the fitness of things. The quick, intelligent, sensitive mind has always delighted in quaint forms, and becoming ceremonies, that give relief to the humdrum of daily life. I insisted that when I was addressed as the Honourable Mus, there was a flutter in me; and I was stirred to remember all my obligations as one of the White Mice. I acted accordingly. I was removed from the common level of men; and felt that I was helping to drive my country in the right direction. Not that as a body we made much progress, or often took action. We

were all agreed—to a Mus—as to the desirability of stemming the tide of democracy; but some were for round plugs, and some were for square; some for a plaster over the mouth, and some for a gun-metal wall.

The absinthes panachés and pure; the grogs, American and otherwise; the choppes of beer of Lyons as well as of Bavaria; the hot wines and the cold wines; the vermouths and the cassis; the sugared water, and the barley water; the groseilles and the bavaresses, we consumed over our patriotic debates, were indeed many. I remarked on one occasion, in a moment of despair, that it appeared to me the only person we were solidly benefiting by our deliberations, was the honourable Mus Cruche, our worthy landlord and colleague. There was a good deal of laughter over my sally, in which Mus Cruche joined heartily; but I took occasion to observe afterwards to Tonnerre, there was matter for serious reflection in it as well. Events were succeeding one another with a rapidity only equalled by the repeated replenishments of Courbet's beer-mug; and there were we meeting day after day, talking over, and often quarrelling over, but never coming to, a resolution on which action could be grounded.

Every Mus comes away from business with a doleful account of his trading. Patin has become insupportable with his growling. Bibelot never fills his pipe without telling us that the country is going to the devil. We debate a national bankruptcy while the waiter is fetching a game of bezique. Between two cannons, Collet Montet asked me how long I thought we were from a general break up? And Titus Blanc observed, while he brushed his hat, that nothing could save us now from the canaille. "Decidedly," said I to Tonnerre at last, "the White Mice are degenerating."

"Not at all, my dear Chose," said Tonnerre. "I don't see the very smallest change. It's a little fresh to you, Chose, because until that day when you ceased to frequent the banks of the Seine, you had remained a sensible bourgeois, leaving your governments like your bread, to be made for you—only reserving to yourself the right of grumbling when the price got extravagant. But directly you, and thousands of your condition, began to dabble in constitution-making, you made fools of yourselves. Leave the bread to the baker."

"What! Tonnerre," I cried, "live like

a beast of the field, without a thought about the happiness of those who are to come after me."

"Those who come after you would gain by the arrangement. What do the White Mice want?" Here the captain swore an awful oath that he didn't know. "I have been a White Mouse to please you, my old friend; and I have assisted at your discussions; only to confirm me in my opinion that no reliance is to be placed in you. There are the canaille getting the upper hand. They turn the corner while you turn an epigram, and, usually, a very indifferent one into the bargain. Words! Speeches! Speeches! You could fill the Imperial Library once a year with your orations; but you have not a single wholesome movement to your back. On the voting days, when the canaille are crowding the mairies, the White Mice lie snug in their wool. You talk about order, but the only order you give is—to the waiter. What is the result? why that the Chief of the State is obliged to count with the rabble; and then when, through your poltroonery, there seems to be imminent danger of a democratic raid upon your shops and houses—we are called in. The Bourse becomes firm at the sound of the drum."

"But," said I, glad to catch Tonnerre upon his own ground, "even the drummers are divided. There are Cæsar's drumsticks, there are the drumsticks of Divine Right; and there are the dirty drumsticks of Nondescript Right—of Right gained by duplicity and family treachery, and by mean arts venerated with constitutionalism. A throne of cotton-backed velvet; a plated sceptre; a diadem glittering with cailloux du Rhin—with a large family of mediocrities quarrelling over even this shabby heritage—is a scandal and a shame to France. Rather give me the republic than the sound of the drummers of the National Guard—with no more authority behind them than is represented by the Hotel des Haricots."

"Ugh! They're scheming to get back the old shop—where their father made so much money. I'm glad, at any rate, Chose, you are not rowing in that galley, with the rest of the White Mice."

"With the rest of the White Mice, Tonnerre! You do them an injustice. There is an O, not as round as that of Giotto; and they know it—with the exception of a wretched little Mus or two, that should never have been admitted to our circle."

"The O you mean is a circle that has

been held up by saltimbanques and has been broken, past repair, by the clumsy clowns who have jumped through it. Still some of the Mice are nibbling at the tatters."

"Never mind the few!" I cried, "think of the attitude of the many."

"Alas! my poor Chose, I only see the various attitudes in which men sip absinthe."

"An English poet has observed," I pursued, "that the best-laid schemes of mice and men may fail."

"Chose," Captain Tonnerre said, with much solemnity, "since you gave up gudgeon-fishing to prepare yourself to be fished for as a gudgeon, you have never shown a more dangerous symptom than I discover in your last observation. When poetry is brought to bear upon politics, it is time for the gendarmerie to saddle."

XI. THE LITTLE MAN IS STILL KICKING.

PETIT bonhomme vit encore! They have thrust him into a corner; turned his luggage out of the presidency; and helped him into private life with a few kicks. The bitter cup he filled some three years ago for other lips, is raised to his own mouth. The caricaturists whom he encouraged, when they were engaged upon his foe, are pouring acid over the grotesque outline of his own little figure. His day of darkness has come; and they are laughing the length of the Boulevards at his discomfiture. The paper for whose editor he was an illustrious statesman yesterday, to-day gives a merry anecdote of his concierge.

A fruiterer called at the residence in which the bonhomme took refuge when the Assembly gave him his congé. The fruiterer was bearing early peaches to "eminent" lips; and, impressed with the importance of his mission, was proceeding up the principal staircase of the hotel, when he was summoned to halt by the concierge. Why was he not ascending the servants' staircase? The tradesman replied that he was carrying some fruit to the great man, and had been requested to take it direct—by the main entrance. An altercation ensued, the noise of which drew forth an old gentleman in slippers and dressing-gown, who begged that the fruit might be at once delivered to him.

"Who is that issuing orders?" cried the indignant concierge.

"It is I, Monsieur Thiers."

The concierge answered with an expres-

sion of contemptuous refusal, and thrust the fruiterer to the servants' entrance.

Is it not vastly entertaining? and is it not encouraging for the bonhomme's successor? Yesterday he was on an equality with kings; and now watch him imploring in vain the good graces of his porter! Behold "the liberator of the territory" the object of a thousand calumnies! He whose catarrh lately made a panic on the Exchange, may die now as soon as he pleases: the sooner the better, if he desire the momentary honour of a public funeral. His secretary is grieved for remaining his friend. The reign of Adolphe is eclipsed; and as he fades from the public sight, there is hardly a word of regret, or of respect, or of thanks, for his many years of service, for his courage and his genius, of which he was prodigal in the hours of his country's peril. The author of many errors; the passionate partisan who helped to his very utmost to drive the Empire into a disastrous war, and who never spared his foe when that foe was vanquished and overlaid with sorrow; the implacable hater of the Nephew whose Uncle he had made the means of his fame as an historian; and the enemy of England and of free trade—Adolphe Thiers was still an illustrious servant of his countrymen. I moved this as a proposition at a meeting of the White Mice which took place on the morrow of the first President's fall, to beg Captain Tonnerre to withdraw his resignation. But we passed to the order of the day without adopting it; and when I told Tonnerre of the fate of my proposition he vowed that, even if he risked my friendship, he would not again put his foot in the club-room.

"At last," said he, "we can go to bed in safety. We have stuck the radicaile to the barrack-gates, as you nail a barn-door owl to the barn door. We have a MAN over us who will not swing like a pendulum from right to left. It is not within our time that Belleville will emigrate to the Faubourg St. Honoré; or that Monsieur Gambetta will sway the destinies of France, with Rochefort for his Minister of Public Instruction.

"Good, good," said I. "Granted, Tonnerre. But, my dear friend, we are still in the presence of at least three régimes. Three equally short cuts to a political Elysium are sufficiently embarrassing."

"But how many have we disposed of—at a blow? Que diable!"

"That is quite true; but Madame Chose

was saying to me this morning she liked your soldier as a soldier; but who was to tell what he was as a statesman? She is not satisfied. We watch the public course of events. Women notice with whom our hero takes his soup. They know something, very often, of our hero's wife. The behind-the-scenes of politics are not on palace back-stairs, nor in the antechambers of ministers, but in the boudoirs of ministers' wives. We have no great salons in our time; but the scattered women's gossip—if you could only collect it as the Indian does the attar of roses, with the leaf of a sword-lily—would give you a truer idea of the current of events than all the newspaper philosophers can convey to you."

"My dear Chose, I have once or twice warned you from a dangerous path. Roses and sword-lilies are the finery of gentlemen who inhabit the clouds—they are not wear for us, who have got to do with barricades and petroleum—the radical's material of war. Your bonhomme, about whom you have been giving the White Mice some delightful sentiments, no doubt, was a swift phrase-maker. If, with his intelligence, he had been born dumb, he might, perhaps, have moved the world. Nothing is powerful, that leaks."

"But I am moved by the spectacle of my country's ingratitude."

"And I am not," Tonnerre boldly replied. "If you pretend to put a man in the way of making his fortune, and you end by placing him in a poorly-paid and precarious clerkship, he will not be very grateful to you, although you picked him roofless and supperless from the streets. Your bonhomme exalted himself too much, and was ungenerous to all his opponents. He rejoiced, and held the corks, when the vials of the national wrath were poured upon innocent heads. The kindred of his foe he proscribed; while he welcomed back the children of his friend to plot against that very institution of which he was president. He snapped the eagles from our standards, and was ready to set up the cotton umbrella and blue pocket-handkerchief of feu Monsieur Smith. You say we have still three régimes before us; but who handed swords and cocked-hats, and got millions voted out of poor France's coffers to one, and that the least reputable, of these? Answer me, Chose, if you can—and then we will have our dominoes."

"You cut questions like a sabreur."

"And you peel them, and peel them, till all the fruit lies in parings at your feet."

It was useless to argue with Tonnerre that day, so I played dominoes with him. And I won my game.

THE ASH POOL.

THE wet wind sobs o'er the sodden leas,
And wails through the branches of leafless trees,
As mourning the seed in the fallows lost,
And the pale buds peeping to die in the frost,
When Winter asserts his lingering reign,
And his sceptre glitters on hill and plain.
Drearly meadows and uplands lie,
'Neath the low long sweep of sullen sky,
And sad and still as the hushed green Yule,
'Neath the straggling boughs lies the Great Ash Pool.

Black and cold, and stagnant and deep,
No silvery fins from its waters leap;
No brown wings flutter, no pattering feet,
Tell that life in its banks finds safe retreat;
No lily-buds to its surface cling,
But docken and nightshade around it spring;
The very trees that about it stand,
Are twisted and gnarled as by witches' hand.
And the ghost of a story of sin and dule,
Like a mist hangs over the Great Ash Pool.

When June's soft magic is on the earth,
And the rose and the violet spring to birth,
When the bright becks dance 'neath the bright leaves'
shade,

And the wild birds carol from glen and glade,
Not a sunbeam glints on its breast to play,
Not a murmur welcomes the golden day,
No children loiter beside its brink,
No shy fawn lingers its wave to drink;
The old trees' shadow is deep and cool,
Yet no lovers keep tryst at the Great Ash Pool.

Yet once by its waters wild vows were spoken,
In passion heard, and in falsehood broken,
Two bright heads over its margin bent,
When the moon to its depths soft radiance lent,
A little while and one face lay there,
With its blue eyes glazed in their last despair,
Eyes that stared upwards, through weed and slime,
With their story of sorrow, and shame, and crime.
So, in glory of summer, or gladness of Yule,
A curse hangs over the Great Ash Pool.

THROWN AMONG WILD BEASTS.

My worthy friend Sparrowshot is one of the most delightful and one of the most inconsequential of human beings. Therefore it was that, as we sat at breakfast the other day in his airy upper chambers in Raymond-buildings, with three young rooks balancing themselves on the long green bough that waved close to the window, I was not surprised when he suddenly ceased singing a snatch from *Les Brigands*, and said:

"I should like you to see a man who has just bought up twenty-four lions at one go."

I said I certainly should like it too, on which Sparrowshot inserted a long cartridge of toast between his lips, and leaping from his chair, snatched up a single-stick, and performed a sort of Shaw the

Life Guardsman's combat with four imaginary enemies, the result of the perusal of a page of one of Marryat's novels that lay open on the table.

"What a fellow Nelson was. There was a beggar," said my volatile friend. "Feel that muscle. Oh, you'd like to see my friend Dan'll's lions?—so you shall. I promised Bonsonby to meet him at the International, but he knows what sort of a fellow I am, and he's sure not to go. You've heard of Noah, well now you shall see his ark."

Sparrowshot is one of the most industrious idle men I know; he is always at your service, and executes more commissions for country friends than any one I ever met. I firmly believe that if you went in now and found him in the agonies of devilling for the Tichborne case, he would leave it all if you proposed it, and at once start on an expedition to go and chop up the North Pole for firewood to keep down the present enormous price of coal. But then, on the other hand, the odds are that before you got him to the North Cape, he would be led off by some passing acquaintance to accompany the enterprising aeronaut, who, with a one-horse steam-engine, is about to raise the wind by defying the Atlantic breezes. His mind is so mercurial, that it begins falling before it is well done rising, and it flies off so quickly at a tangent that his sentences seldom seem to reach their journey's end.

"You've heard," he said, suddenly emerging in shirt-sleeves from the inner room, into which he had a moment before retired to dress, working away, for his life, at his scrubby reddish hair with two enormous brushes, "you've heard, old boy, of the party who ordered two monkeys from Brazil, and the agent mistook the figures, and sent two thousand?"

I replied in the affirmative.

"Well, that party was a fool to Dan'll, whom we're going to see; he would not have been bothered by suddenly receiving two thousand monkeys; Lord bless you, he would have been delighted. Where has that old idiot of a laundress put my boots? I've told her twenty— Why, when I first called on him, he'd how many parquets do you think just come from Australia?"

I mildly guessed a dozen.

"A dozen! five hundred and twenty-two. What do you say to buying a rhinoceros for your uncle, the old party who said he thought my tobacco rather strong?"

'Strong,' said I, 'I rather flatter myself it is, for I always steep it for three weeks in brandy and gunpowder.' How he warned you about me afterwards! I'll kill that boy when he comes." (Clerk one hour behind time.) "I'll leave a torpedo in his desk, with an half-hour fuse—see if I don't."

"And where is this ark?"

"Why, in Ratcliff Highway, of course, to be near the shipping. What do you think was Dan'll's consignment the last time I went there to buy an elephant for my friend Slocum at the Salisbury Zoological?"

I could hardly guess, so I did not.

Sparrowshot totted it off on his fingers, the water dripping down his face, for he had just raised it from the washing-basin, and looked like a water god just landed.

"Three elephants, five boa constrictors, six Guinea baboons."

"That's cheap for a poor relation."

"Get out with you! Six Guinea baboons, ten alligators, twenty prairie dogs, ten rattlesnakes, fourteen cockatoos, twelve tigers—or were there eleven tigers, hang me if I— Now where the deuce is that collar?"

I did not venture to suggest the completion of the Dan'll catalogue; but I thought it right to suggest that Sparrowshot had been talking in my presence the night before of a consultation that afternoon in the case of Goodson versus Chattlebury, which Sparrowshot was devilling for that eminent Q.C., Bothrem.

"Oh, let 'em wait. I'm not going to lose a day like this grubbing over the Chattlebury pedigrees, and the right of turbary on Chattlebury goose green. I've worked quite enough over that case, and all I got is a snubbing from Bothrem, because I did not remember how many nephews an old Chattlebury of Queen Anne's reign had. I'd sooner spend a night in Dan'll's menagerie than get wigged again by old Bothrem. Just write a card, and put on the door, 'IMPORTANT BUSINESS—BACK TO-MORROW.'"

I believe that Sparrowshot was just that sort of fellow, that if he had had five hundred pounds in his pocket, and Dan'll had tempted him with an elephant newly imported, and recommended him as a servicable animal "for single or double harness," Sparrowshot would have closed with him at once, and gone off delighted with the bargain.

We were soon on our way to the distant region beyond the Tower where Dan'll and

his twenty-four lions resided. On the way Sparrowshot discoursed much of a naturalist friend of his, one Strongitharm, according to Sparrowshot's account one of the most delightful and most eccentric enthusiasts of science, and certainly one of the most athletic. He had held down a lion at the Zoo while the royal animal had an eye-tooth drawn. He had thrown a young dragoon officer bodily out of window at Canterbury, for balancing a water-jug on an open door, and nearly fracturing his (Strongitharm's) skull. He had fought three fishermen in the north of Ireland for ill-treating a seal. He had sat up for nights feeding a sickly young rhinoceros.

"But it's no joke staying down at Strongitharm's," said Sparrowshot, with sudden gravity. "I've seen his little girl in bed with a snake round her neck and two monkeys on the counterpane. When my governor was living near town, down in Hertfordshire, the beggar was always sending us queer things to take care of, till we got the house choke-full, and the governor grew rusty. I remember at one time we had two large white rats, a badger that eat up half the furniture, and a monkey that bit every one. He then sent us a tame cobra, but the governor could not stand that, and there was a regular row." Here Sparrowshot opened the trap-door in the roof of the cab and asked the cabby, in a loud voice, whether he was ever hired for a funeral, and whether he thought he was going to be paid by the hour; he then made a sudden dig at the horse's flank with his umbrella, which sent us off with a jerk that produced a low mumble of oaths from the back of the hansom.

A clear bowl over the smooth asphalt of Cheapside, a flutter of green at the corner of Wood-street, a glimpse of stately Bow, and we were in Eastcheap, a narrow defile with bales descending into waggons, a block of carts, and the four pinnacles of the White Tower rising before us. A rattle of wheels, more mountainous warehouses, and we were in the amphibious world beyond the Mint. Every shop now seemed nautical; at nearly every door hung waterproof coats and sou'-wester hats; and ship biscuits, binnacles, and canvas, were apparently the chief articles in demand.

"Here we are," said Sparrowshot, suddenly, as the cab stopped with a jerk, and leaping out, was hurrying into the ark when the cabman with a "Hi!" suggested payment.

Our cabman strongly objected to Sparrowshot's theory of the distance from Raymond-buildings to Ratcliff Highway, and on eventually accepting his fare under protest, muttered something, and drove sullenly away.

"There's a beggar," said Sparrowshot. "That reminds me of a driving fellow at Naples who wanted to draw his knife because I didn't— But here, come along, here's the ark, and a pretty happy family you'll see in it—but what are these young covies looking at?"

There were half a dozen street urchins lying flat on their stomachs near Dan'll's cellar rails, and looking in with all their eyes.

"What's up, you boys?" said Sparrowshot, paternally.

"Why it's a lot of young halligators just brought in, mister; there's one by the window there in a box, you can see his tail. He's a venomous one, I know, ain't he, Bill," said the spokesman of the party.

"I don't want to make you nervous, old boy," said Sparrowshot, as we looked in at Dan'll's windows, "but Dan'll keeps his wild beasts in very rickety cages, so look out. I never go up-stairs there but I expect to meet a tiger on the first-floor landing, and a boa constrictor winding round the bannisters. He doesn't care what the creature is; I believe if he had his own way he'd keep them all loose."

"A nice republic there would be then," said I.

"I believe you," said Sparrowshot. "There was a fire close by Dan'll's yard, a house or two up, and I believe the way the tigers howled, and the hyenas laughed, and the monkeys screamed, was something not heard every day; but luckily none escaped, or we might have heard of a lion eating a policeman or a fireman or two, and have had a tiger-hunt in Wapping."

We found the long, low-roofed shop littered with cages and packing-cases, and full, as the magician's room in the Arabian Night's story, of cockatoos, polecats, love-birds, and other pleasant and unpleasant creatures. That scarlet macaw had perhaps been a vizir of Persia, that sullen falcon an Indian prince, and here they were after long and rough voyages in Dan'll's Noah's Ark, ready for shipment to any part of the world.

We found Jam, alias Dan'll, the head magician, in a little back room, wrapped in a dingy dressing-gown, a German smoking-cap adorning his head. There were

birds and beasts all round him, and a clothes-basket covered by a rug on one side of him. He had just received an order for six pumas and two cameleopards, and was giving directions to a piratical-looking workman whom he was perhaps ordering off to Africa at a moment's notice to scour jungle and desert.

"Well, Jam," said Sparrowshot, "and how's the world going with you?"

"Oh, round, round," replied the magician, in a strong foreign dialect.

"Just brought a friend to see you."

"Quite welcome," said the magician, waving his smoking-cap and pointing generally round with his pipe, "but stock rather short just now—sent off our last lion yesterday."

Just at that moment the rug lifted off the washing-basket at Noah's feet, and out stretched two red hairy arms and a round head covered with soft thin red hair. It was a young ourang-outang from Sumatra, and as we looked it drew the rug half over itself again in a sly cross way, and peeped out with cunning, frightened, yet malicious eyes.

"Take care of him," said Dan'll, "he bit a man badly yesterday."

"By Jove, did he though," said Sparrowshot, looking at our poor relation as if he were a barrel of gunpowder; "you ought to warn a fellow, Jam, you know."

Jam laughed gravely at this, as if the idea of Sparrowshot being bitten by his young protégé was the most exquisite of practical jokes.

"Ah! ah!" he said, like one of those Dutch goblins whom Rip Van Winkle revelled with on the Catskill Mountains, "you should see one of my yellows handle a basketful of cobras; why you ain't avraid of a rang-etang? he'll be as tame as a child in a week."

"Isn't it true, Jam, that you once had four-and-twenty lions at the same time?" said Sparrowshot, examining a seedy-looking, disreputable vulture who blinked at him from inside a very dirty cage.

"Vy, who told you so?"

"Who told me? why Harry."

"Very vell then, Harry ought to know. I can't keep all these things in my head. I know very well that there have been times when I should have been glad of fifty."

Harry, a short, swarthy, nautical, I may say piratical sort of person in a red shirt, here came up and asked the great magician whether he should take the gentlemen

down into the cellars to see the lot of young alligators "wot" had just arrived.

The magician expressing a certain gloomy approval as he scratched a black cockatoo's head, we descended some dark stairs to a sort of smuggler's cellar, where, after clambering over an alpine region of packing-cases, we reached a clear space by the window, where in long barred boxes the alligators were placed. The boxes seemed full of some bossy india-rubber substance, but on Harry stirring them up, the masses began to undulate and snort with repressed rage and vexation.

"Why they can't feed shut up like that," said I.

"Oh, they won't eat," said Harry, "nor will the snakes, not one in a dozen; but if they keep alive three months that pays their expenses for showing, and then they can be stuffed."

"Poor beggars," said Sparrowshot.

"Precious wishious that's what they is," said Harry, "and they've got teeth enough to stock a dentist, and yet you can't get 'em to eat no how. It's their temper, I s'pose."

"Enough to put out any one's temper being boxed up like that," thought I.

Harry now proposing to show us the "guvnor's" museum, we re climbed the stairs and ascended to the rooms above the shop. They were old rooms, with all the dusty furniture of the last occupant still there—dusty sofas, grimy mirrors, and dingy carpets, like a Dirty Dick's of twenty years ago. At first the place seemed to me like the cabin of a vessel, then like the bivouac of a tribe of South Sea Islanders, for the walls were hung with war-clubs, waddies, and spears, and weapons ferociously edged with shark's teeth, and sheaves of poisoned arrows. Then again it presented the appearance of a deserted curiosity-shop, the proprietor of which having been lost at sea, the motley treasure had never since been touched, for the dust, gross and palpable as pepper, lay thick in the china cups, and on the lacquered shields and Indian models; and as Harry prefaced every remark with "when I was in the Bight of Benin," or "last time as I was in Sumatra," the general result was that of going round the world in a heavy sea on board a Noah's Ark laden with curiosities to purchase wild beasts.

"I've just come from Bombay," said Harry, in reply to Sparrowshot's inquiry as to what he had been up to lately; "and am off next Tuesday to Cape of Good

Hope to pick up one or two things for the guvnor," and here he struck a gong spitefully.

We had now got into a sort of gallery hung with South Sea weapons.

"Take care of them arrows," he said; "they're every one pisened; you see that red mark on the club, that's human blood—bought that yesterday. The sailors bring everything here. You see this club" (pointing to a huge semicircular flat hatchet of wood), "they takes off heads with that."

Certainly, if bludgeons are any indication of ferocity, I should not select the Fiji Islands to go to as a missionary, for such skull-cracking monsters of clubs I never saw as came from that happy land. Fourteen shillelachs would not make up that enormous stop-thief that had the blood stains. Models of Chinese junks, Kaffir cloaks, New Zealand mats, Japanese fishing-rods, daggers, and swords, and guns of all sizes and bores, hung beside these trophies of our commercial enterprise, ready for Jam's queer customers—the naturalists, showmen, museum collectors, and odd people of Great Britain.

At spare moments Harry drew a sword or struck a gong, just to keep his hand in as the governor's showman.

"I knew a fellow once," said Sparrowshot, apropos of nothing, "who drove four deer in a pony carriage, and he got on very well till one day he fell in with the Duke of Beaufort's hounds, and that time they may certainly be said to have had a run. Indeed, if he hadn't bolted into a stable-yard just in time, and shut the door, I don't think there would have been much of him or his prancers left."

Harry, who was just beginning something about the Straits of Malacca, said that was a rum start as ever he'd heard, an approval which much pleased Sparrowshot.

We now proposed to go and see the animals which Jam keeps in various stables and yards in adjoining streets. We might, perhaps, pick up a lion cheap, or find a bargain in a knot of boa constrictors. We found Jam still in the back parlour, nursing that prematurely old young man, the "rang-etang," who seemed to regard his master with anything but filial regard.

"You come again ven our next sheep comes in," was the magician's parting valediction, "and then we shall have something to show, for we expect half a dozen of about the finest tigers in all Bengal."

"Did you ever hear the story of old Monson chloroforming the tiger, and taking out his eye-teeth?" inquired Sparrowshot of me. "You haven't? well, then, just you remind me at dinner-time. We'll have a fish dinner at Billingsgate after this, and some cold punch. Are you game?"

I replied that I quite thought I was, and that I was prepared then to endure any number of tiger stories; and might even, if pressed, swallow a snake or two, provided they were fresh.

"Oh, there's no gammon about Monson. Any one in Bombay——"

"Bengal, you mean."

"Well, Bengal; what the doose does it matter? Tigers ain't confined to Bengal. Monson was out with two famous shekarries, and had fallen asleep in a rock temple near Avadarah waiting for tiffin. I had two uncles in Madras——"

"Bengal."

"Well, what the——two uncles in the——"

Here Harry threw open the yard door.

"Our stock's very low just now, gents. I must apologise to yer for our last lion being sold two days ago; but we've one or two choice things." Here he pointed to some rickety dens with rather insecure bars that stood round the yard, which, by the way, a sensitive nose would have found "rather high." "Here's a black panther—rather scarce. Savage? I believe you; eat you without salt if he could get at you."

"Any bears?"

"Not a mortal one. Hyenas, leopards, vultures, Barbary rats, wolves, but ne'er a bear; not much asked for just now."

"By Jove! what a brute," observed Sparrowshot, as he poked the black panther with his umbrella, and it retreated sullenly, hissing spitefully, with closed teeth, like a mad cat, its eye-balls reddening slightly as the blood mounted to his head.

Above it were two leopards, agile and cruel; beautifully marked, and every motion instinct with a certain diabolical grace. Swift on an Indian pitcher-carrier I think I can see them dart, and my imagination can almost call up the screams through the jungle which mark where they drag the body, and the spotted cubs gambol and rejoice to see the mangled and bleeding prey!

"I'd buy that lot, Harry," said Sparrowshot, who assumed the air of a purchaser of vast wealth, "if I knew where to

keep 'em, but they wouldn't do in Gray's Inn, eh?" This to me.

I expressed an opinion that they scarcely would, unless he occasionally fed them with an old Q.C.

"No ostriches, I suppose, Harry; no cameleopards?"

"Not a shadow of one."

"I was afraid not," said Sparrowshot, in a mortified way, as much as to say, if there had been, then I'd have been the man for you. He had been rather distant with me ever since the chloroformed tiger story in the uncertain presidency. The beauty of some mouse-deer from Ceylon, however, made him relax a little.

"Did you ever see such dainty little beggars?" he exclaimed, turning back to insult the black panther for the last time.

They certainly were beauties, the deer minimised by climate till he did not stand higher than a toy terrier—deer that a rat would slay in open battle. I began to fall into a reverie, as we moved on to the coarse, low-bred, skulking, blackguardly-looking hyena, on the mighty power wielded by Jam. In all parts of the world, savage and unsavage, people to secure his guineas were hunting and trapping, as one of the most eloquent of the London papers said the other day in the most simple language, "From where the floating icebergs, like diamond mountains, drift before the fierce northers, to where the Bushmen warriors dance like armies of pigmies round the gigantic elephant, Jam's emissaries are at work, with assegai and krease, with the keen Damascus blade, and the fatal blow-pipe," &c.

"Sparrowshot," said I, grasping his arm, as I quoted Keats, "'Are you prepared to go all naked to the ravening shark?'"

"Not if I know it, old boy," was the not unnatural reply with which my enthusiasm was rewarded.

"Very well, then, push on. Here's some white peacocks fit to draw the car of Juno—of Juno? nay, of Venus."

"By George! look at these spoonbills," cried Sparrowshot, from a rival cage. "Did you ever see such queer beggars in your life? There's a bill for picking up peas. I used to think fish the queerest beggars ever made; but, 'pon my word, when you look at the toucan's nose and the—— By-the-bye, what time is it by your ticker?"

"Only fancy those white peacocks," said I, reverting to the cage of those beau-

tiful birds, looking like brides in a state of metamorphosis, "with emerald eyes in their tails, and golden crests."

"Ah! you always want to embroider nature," said Sparrowshot, sarcastically; "and if you had your emerald tails, then you'd want opal eyes. There is no satisfying you."

"Last year," broke in Harry, who did not choose to remain in the background, and who evidently thought my peacock suggestion an absurdity, "when we was going through the Straits of Madagascar with some three dozen monkeys for the guv'nor—"

"Have you got any kangaroos to show us, Harry?" said Sparrowshot.

"Well, we're just out of kangaroos now," said Harry, apologetically, "but we expect some in at the docks every day. They go so very fast, kangaroos does."

In nearly every shed in the yard, untenanted by wild beasts, into which I peeped, I saw rats peering about for provender, and darting back through small corner holes almost before I could well see them.

"Ah!" says Harry, "there's an uncommon lot of rats here; they come after the animals' wittals; but they make a mistake sometimes with the vultures, and have to pay entrance fees pretty heavily."

Stopping to look at a large falcon, the very acme of cruelty and grace, we passed out of the yard into a large stable surrounded by cages and barred boxes.

"This hanimal," said Harry, pointing to an old forlorn-looking monkey, with one side paralysed, "this hanimal's mind's gone; he don't observe anything. It's not worth much, but the guv'nor doesn't like to kill him, as he's been with us a long time, and we've got accustomed to him like."

The monkey had exactly the expression I have seen in human beings under the same double affliction. He looked at us with a vacant, stunned, suffering expression, as if he had been struck a blow and was expecting another. Our poor relation, indeed, presented a woe-begone helplessness that even the hardest heart must have pitied.

"There's an argument for Darwin," said Sparrowshot, who had shot off at a tangent to see a wild cat in a distant cage, and now returned; "you see he had a mind once, or else it could not have gone. Why, any fool can see he's got a tile off—poor beggar."

"A black fellow in Bonny River told me,"

said Harry, "that the devil made monkeys as a caricature of man, and that after that he made the nigger; but the nigger turned out so ugly that the old gentleman struck him in the face, and that flattened his nose, turned his face black, and curled his hair."

"Well done, Harry, that's not bad for Harry; but he's evidently not read Darwin, or he'd have more respect for his great-grandfather."

"Here's a mongooze," said Harry, rousing an animal out of the back of a long dark box; "one of the prettiest things to make a pet of. Kills snakes before you can say Jack Robinson, and never gets bitten to speak of. There's a law against taking them out of the country, so we has to smuggle them, or we should pretty soon get pepper, as my mate here will tell you."

The mate, a rough-looking fellow, who was cleaning out a cage, grunted assent, as much as to say, "Oh, you go on with your patter. I shan't get any fees out of the gentry coves. I haven't got the gift of the gab, I haven't, and I don't want to have. Patter away; the more lies you tell, the more they'll like you. I've got a job here, and I'm going to do it. Patter away!"

Harry now proposed an ascent into a loft, where he had some young boa constrictors to show us, and up we went.

"We had a fire near here," he said, "a month or two ago, and you should have seen the animals. We happened to have twenty lions or so in stock, and an elephant, and two or three tigers. We've been nearly cleared out since that. I never did hear such a noise in my born days; it would have frightened you gents who isn't used to it; monkeys screaming, lions roaring, tigers trying to break loose, paroquets (we'd got a room full of them) squalling. I tell you I wasn't sorry when things got a bit quieter, for I thought at one time they were all going stark staring mad together. It reminded me of a mutiny of coolies I once saw in coming back from Valparaiso. Our cages are rather old, too, some of them, and if they had given way—well, I shouldn't be here now, gents, a talking to you."

"I quite agree with you there," said Sparrowshot.

"Yours is rather a risky occupation," said I.

"Well," said Harry, wiping his forehead with a red strip of handkerchief which he took out of his cap; "but you see habit

is second nature, and like people who takes care of loonatics, and knackers, and others of that sort, I never thinks much about the danger. We knows what to do and how to handle 'em, and they don't get much chance of hurting us, or they pretty soon would, you may take your oath, for there's no coaxing some of them, they've that devil's own temper in them, and I suppose the keeping them shut up doesn't improve that. As for some of 'em, I'd sleep in their dens for all the fear I have. Jim."

Here he shouted down stairs.

"Come up, Jim, and give us a hand with these 'ere snakes, to show the gentlemen."

Jim shamled up, grumbling under his breath, and dragging out a huge chest, opened it, dived his hand among the blankets, and drew out two great spotted cables of snakes, holding their heads just below the air-gills, as gamekeepers hold ferrets, as I perhaps unjustly thought to convey an impression of the danger of their bite. It was Hercules grown up and struggling with the Hydra, but Jim had no sense of posing, and was evidently only meditating whether he should get anything for beer.

"You see," said Harry, "there's a steady demand for these 'ere snakes in the travelling shows. They must have 'em, whatever the price is, because country people who've never seen anything larger than a blind-worm, or a stray hadder or so, open their eyes at big fellows like these, and go home and tell everybody to go and see 'em. They'd put a nice grip on a fellow, even these young uns would, if they had a chance."

As he said this, Harry flung the great slimy black and yellow coils back into the box, and slammed down the chest as if it had been Pandora's casket, and all the blessings of the gods were escaping.

I had long felt a nightmare kind of diabolical wish stealing over me to overpower and bind Harry and Jim, and then to let out all their prisoners, to the terror of Wapping and the dismay of Rotherhithe. Boa constrictors, vultures, wild cats, my poor friend the insane monkey, black panthers, white peacocks, spoonbills, leopards, badgers, mongooze, and all. I should like to have emptied Noah's Ark and given them all liberty in one general grotesque emancipation. What right had Dan'll to set half the world to work catching the other; what right to sweep sea and rock, and sand and forest, to fill caravans with misery; was the lion, regal in his

strength and freedom, intended to be shown at a penny a head, or the bear to be deprived of his hermitage in the snow? Certainly not. Behold, then, in me your liberator, and when you are free respect your emancipator. Be gentle, be merciful, respect property—Vive la République Universelle—make good use of your liberty. Attack only the emissaries of Jam, wage war on Dan'll and Dan'll's men, even though just returned from the Straits of Madagascar!

"How long are you going to stand there, staring at that fool of a spoonbill?" said Sparrowshot, rudely breaking up my day-dream of freedom and universal republics.

"It's time we were off. Harry has got to go to the docks about a rhinoceros and some more alligators, and we mustn't keep him."

Harry here remarked that many swells bought beavers, buffaloes, and what not, but that it was only the regular "Onner" who bought a rhinoceros.

We "backsheeshed" the men, left Harry in the Bight of Benin with a cargo of cassowaries who wouldn't take kindly to their food, and started for a walk to Stepney to get an appetite for our fish dinner.

As we stopped at Dan'll's window to take a last fond look at the black cockatoo, Sparrowshot, after a moment's reflection, exclaimed:

"What queer beggars there are in the world!" A quarter of a mile further on he said: "I'll tell you what I mean to do, old man: I'll get an aquarium and keep whitebait, to see what they come to. It'd be jolly to have one now and then for luncheon, too, while the investigation was pending, eh? And by Jove, if I ever come into the money of that uncle of mine at St. Mary Axe, and get his place down at Bootleham, I'll be hanged if I won't buy two cameleopards. I can't fancy anything jollier than driving cameleopards tandem, can you?"

NO ALTERNATIVE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "DENIS DUNNE," &c.

CHAPTER VIII. "HAVE YOU A BROTHER, MR. FERRIER?"

"You would give me up very easily, mother," was Harty's only rejoinder to her mother's last speech. And at this calmness when she had anticipated meeting with a burst of overwhelming emotion, Mrs. Devenish broke down, cast her arms round

Harty's neck, and with many sobs cried out that it was a cruel fate which compelled her to choose between her husband, her "poor injured, persecuted Edward," and her child.

"But you wouldn't lose me, mamma—no, Mabel, don't shake your head and look as if you knew better—you wouldn't lose me; Claude would welcome you always gladly, and I might come to you; you would have me still, and I" (the girl's voice broke here) "should have Claude."

"We shall never meet again, Harty, from the day you leave this house as Claude Powers's wife, until we meet—in—heaven," Mrs. Devenish gasped out, and Harty answered sorrowfully:

"You mean Mr. Devenish would never let you come to me, or me to you, mother; well, then, I shall never leave this house as Claude's wife; but, mother, you're a free woman; you could say, 'I will.'"

Mrs. Devenish bemoaned herself for a minute or two, looking nervously at the door the while. Then she blushed for the cowardice and the cruelty of it all and said:

"Harty, he has suffered too much for his wife to turn against him, or to hear others blame him for the cruel accidents of his life, which have robbed it of all hope, and made him what he is; but, Harty, in my first burst of anger at Claude's cruel injustice, I did not give myself time to think. Edward's heart is so good, his love for us all so true, that perhaps when I have told him all, he will sacrifice his own feelings, and make all smooth for us; but when he has done it, dear, you must never forget that it has been at the cost of bitter humiliation to himself."

She looked wistfully at Harty, hoping that she would become emotionally forgetful of all the "unintentional" suffering Mr. Devenish had caused her. But with all her faults Harty was not a hypocrite. All she could bring herself to say was:

"If Mr. Devenish does make any sacrifice of feeling for my happiness, I shall certainly never forget it, mother." Which was a way of recognising the faint possibility that struck Mabel as being especially hard and cold.

"I had better go to him now, and tell him all," Mrs. Devenish said, tremulously. In very truth she did shrink from facing her prized martyr with something that was very near akin to fear. Then she went on her bitter mission, promising to let Harty know the result of it after the girl had gone to her own room.

"I shall go to bed at once, Mab," Harty said as her mother left them. "I'm not fit to talk until I know whether or not Mr. Devenish is going to be moderately humane for once in his life; he might let our miserable mother have this one gleam of happiness in her darkened life; he might let her make one of her children thoroughly happy."

As Mabel was not ready with an answer, Harty did not wait to hear it, but went away at once to her room, where she sat going through every phase of the sharpest suspense, until she was joined by her mother. Then—the first look at Mrs. Devenish's face was enough. Mr. Devenish had not sacrificed his feelings, and so established an eternal claim on her gratitude.

"Poor mother!" Harty said, as her mother advanced wiping her eyes, and looking miserably unsuccessful. "You have not been able to do all you wished to do for me? I see that; tell me about it; can you?"

"Harty, my darling, I'll give you up; I'll not quench the light of your life; you shall marry the man you love—the man who has so faithfully loved you for so long; but we must give each other up, dear, for trouble has strengthened poor Edward's prejudices."

"Will he part us, mother, if I marry Claude?"

"Yes," Mrs. Devenish answered, hesitatingly; "he has been so wronged, so tried, you know, this last crowning insult has been too much for him; he claims the duty that I owe him as his wife, and declares that I shall never see my own child after she is Claude Powers's wife; we can't wonder at his turning, Harty," she went on, anxiously, "he has been so trodden down."

"I wonder if I shall ever get to feel like that for Claude," Harty thought; "I wonder if my love will ever make me abject."

"Well, mother," she said aloud; "it's no use saying any more about it now; we won't be parted, will we, mother? If Claude will only believe as I do, that time will make it all right, I can be very happy."

Then Mrs. Devenish did exactly as Harty had prophesied she would do, prayed and pleaded that her daughter would follow the dictates of her own heart, and insure her highest happiness at the cost of relinquishing all intercourse with her mother.

"I would bear it, Harty, without a complaint; we would get away from here, and no one would know that we were entirely separated," the poor woman urged, "and I should hear of you through Mabel."

But Harty only shook her head, and brushed away an indignant tear or two, and said:

"No, no; we must wait; some change will come, I'm certain of that; I must wait for it."

Claude heard of the fiat that had gone forth, and of Harty's determination to abide by it, with a good deal of heart-sinking, the next day. The intervening hours had not been too pleasant to him. For in addition to the natural soul-wearing suspense which he was called upon to sustain, there was the irritating knowledge that a feeling which had never existed before, had suddenly sprung up between Jack Ferrier and himself; when they met at dinner after that parting by the Leeth, each found himself avoiding all mention of the girls who had been their companions, and each found himself speculating as to the reason why the other did so.

Claude, with that morbid sensitiveness of his which had led him into error more than once in his life, thought that, perhaps, Jack Ferrier, his friend, was pitying him for his evident attachment to a girl who had, perhaps, been guilty of carrying on a double game. While Jack Ferrier, about whom there was nothing morbid, nothing akin to sensitiveness, nor suspiciousness, was thinking, "There's a screw loose somewhere, and it's that girl who has done it. I think I had better get myself out of this, for no woman shall ever come between Claude and me."

So about the same time that night, as Harty and her mother were having it out so unsatisfactorily, Jack Ferrier sounded the first note of separation.

Claude had written and despatched his terms to Mrs. Devenish, as has been seen, and in order to while away the time that must necessarily elapse before he could possibly get an answer, he proposed billiards. It was an unwary move, for it took them away from the restraining presence of Mrs. Powers. And neither man was quite in the mood this night to speak with perfect openness or moderate discretion.

"I'll give you ten in a hundred, and beat you," Jack Ferrier began, and Claude girded against the proffered favour, though

each was in the habit of giving similar ones to the other constantly.

"I don't want you to give me a point; I've no doubt you would beat me in most things, but at billiards we are just about equal, I think."

There was nothing in the words themselves, but there was a good deal that was chilling in the tone in which they were uttered. The chill smote Jack Ferrier's face like a sharp blast, and made his face flush.

"Come, old fellow," he said, "you know as well as I do that there isn't a single thing I could beat you in if I tried, excepting billiards and dancing," he added, with a laugh. Then, in his confusion, he made the most unhappy remark he could have made at that juncture. "That little girl—that Miss Carlisle—dances like a slipper; I'm sorry I shan't have another round or two with her; I find I must go and see my people soon."

"What's all this about?" Claude asked quickly, pausing before his stroke, and looking suspiciously at Jack Ferrier, who kept his eyes steadily fixed on the end of the cigar which he was trying to puff alight, and abstained from noticing Claude's "What's all this about?" "I never knew that you had any people belonging to you that you cared to see, now poor Frank is gone; and now you develop them in a moment, and contemplate smashing up our plans."

"Oh! I think it's the right kind of thing to do after being out of the country for so long, to look up one's people; they're not very near, and they're not very dear, to tell the truth—a set of aunts and cousins—"

"You never thought of one of them today," Claude interrupted. "Out with it, dear old boy; tell me what has put them into your head, and made you feel their claims so strongly suddenly?"

"Conscience has touched up my family feeling, I suppose," Jack Ferrier answered, laughing a little awkwardly. "You had really better let me go without saying a word more about it."

Claude walked to the other side of the table, where his face could hardly be discerned under the shaded lamp, before he spoke. Then he said:

"Are you afraid of losing your head, and going down before Miss Carlisle?"

"Yes, that's about it," Jack answered, bluntly. "I don't understand her, and I don't want to bother myself by puzzling about her; I had better go."

"You will understand more about her in a very short time," Claude said, in a low voice; "don't go, old fellow; you'll be all right, and we'll have those rides together with the Miss Carlises that you planned this morning."

"What do you mean?" Jack asked, wonderingly.

"I can't tell you; you'll find out very soon; only stay; there's nothing for you to run away from; I can tell you that."

"He means that he won't interfere with me, if she is too much for me in sober earnest," Jack thought. "I'll risk it anyway; very likely, when I see her the next time, I shall not like her."

"I'll stay then, Claude, and my people must wait in vain for a sight of me a little longer," he said aloud. So it was decided that he should remain, and remain he did, under a misapprehension.

Mrs. Devenish's answer came the next morning. She gave him her daughter freely, if her daughter liked to go to him, she said. And then she told him of what would follow! She made no complaint of her husband for his decision; she acceded to it meekly, but the hand which traced the words, "I shall be parted from my child for ever in this world!" had shaken pitifully with the pain that was in her heart.

With a muttered execration against the combination of vicious cruelty and maddening weakness that was between Harty and himself, he turned from the perusal of this letter to one from Harty herself. It was very brief.

"DEAREST CLAUDE,—I pity myself more than I do you, because you can go away if you like and shake off the memory of me, while I must stay here, and nurse the thought of you—and all you might have been to me. I can't make my mother's lot harder; it would be putting a knife into Mr. Devenish's hands, which he would always be sticking into her heart. It's all over. But, if you stay here, we will be friends, won't we?"

"Yours ever,

"HARTY."

It was a crushing blow to him; for in his heart he had made sure of her now; he had made very sure that love would have made her mother strong enough to do open battle with that subtle cruelty of Mr. Devenish's which had constructed this ingenious revenge.

It was a bad blow to him, for he really

loved Harty, and there was no joy to him in that proposal of hers that he should stay on at the Court, that they should meet, and be friends. It was such a poor tame substitute for the relations he had striven to establish between them. But at length, after an hour or two spent in making resolutions to go to the uttermost ends of the earth, he determined that he would stay, that he would see Harty as often as he could, and that he would teach her that love was the lord of all, and make her rescind her resolve.

It was a bad blow, and it was followed so terribly soon by another. He saw when he went in and sat down to luncheon that there was something abnormal in Mrs. Powers's appearance. She had evidently been crying. She was evidently in a passion; for she was trembling, flushed, unable to eat or drink, and equally unable to conceal these marks of agitation from the two young men.

At last, after Claude had made the remark, "There's something amiss with you, aunt, you're not up to the mark, dear old lady," she responded to it with much additional flushing and trembling, and the words:

"I intended waiting to tell you of something that has annoyed me greatly, Claude, until we were alone, but I suppose I may speak before Mr. Ferrier: the people in Dillsborough are taking your name very much in vain already; Mrs. Greyling came here this morning and congratulated me, actually congratulated me, on your engagement to Harty Carlisle, and affirmed that she had it on the young lady's authority that you were going to marry her."

Claude winced, and contemplated pursuing an evasive course for a moment or two. Then all his manliness asserted itself and he determined to "put the girl in a good place at any rate."

"Harty Carlisle has altered her mind since Mrs. Greyling badgered her on the subject; I have had a letter of definite refusal from her this morning, if that is any satisfaction to any one. For all that, I like her, and mean to continue friendly with her if she'll have my friendship, and I'll cut any woman, and break any fellow's head, who speaks about it again, if I hear it."

Mrs. Powers heaved a long irrepressible sigh of relief, and a dead silence set in.

"He's telling me plainly that as he's tried his luck and failed, I'm free to try mine," Jack Ferrier thought, as he sat with his

eyes bent on the table-cloth, on which he was making a plan in crumbs of the bank of the Leeth, and the meadow lands adjoining. And then, as the silence lasted, he fell to wondering if it was because she liked him a little, that Harty Carlisle had refused Powers of the Court, the best match among the commoners of the county.

"We'll all agree never to say a word more about this subject, till I give the signal to start it again," Claude said, after a long time, and he said it in a sort of imperatively pleading way, that compelled them to assent to it at once. So their lips being sealed on the subject, all possibility of clearing away the mists of misapprehension was abolished, and Jack Ferrier was confirmed in his belief that Claude wished him to feel that the girl was as free to be won, as he was to win her.

"And you must ask the girls here just as usual," Claude said to his aunt; "any change would cause more confounded gabble, and I'll smash up the Court if I'm gabbled about; ask the girls here just as usual, and be kind in taking them, when they're asked, to other places. The old people won't visit, so there's no difficulty about them."

"Dear old thoughtful, unselfish fellow," Jack Ferrier thought, in a glow of affection and admiration for his friend who had been rejected, "he'll give me every chance if I care to take it; he's about the only fellow in the world who would do it." And Jack Ferrier felt as Saul for Jonathan. And all the time Claude had no thought of Jack in the matter; but was thinking solely of the best way of continuing to have unfettered intercourse with Harty. So the mistake took root, grew and flourished.

Late autumn found them carrying out those plans which had been organised in the summer. Claude had filled his stables very much to the satisfaction of himself and friends; and a married woman, about whom no man's tongue (nor woman's either) had ever wagged, had been found and secured, and persuaded to be the guardian angel of the riding parties. Inconsistent as it may appear, Mr. Devenish made no effort to crush the constant intercourse between the young people. His wife admired him for his patient tolerance, and did not know that he was patiently tolerant to the passing annoyance, because he thought that it would bring greater misery upon Claude and Harty both in the end.

For he hated these two; he hated Claude because Claude knew when to put his finger on the blackest spot in his life; and Harty because, unwittingly, she had brought this avenger upon him again. He was not a good man, this one whom Harty's mother loved and believed in; and if he could have brought sorrow, humiliation, and shame upon Claude Powers and Harty Carlisle, he would have done it with all the heart he had.

Accordingly he made it all very easy in a way. His own miserable health was a sufficient excuse for them to offer to outsiders for himself and his wife having no share in that much coveted intimacy which the two girls seemed to be enjoying. And Dillsborough was very little the wiser for that indiscretion on the part of Harty which had led her to avow that Claude "was going to marry her" on the occasion of Mrs. Greyling's call, for Mrs. Powers had seen that lady, and told her of that threatened "smash up of the Court" which Claude would make if there was "any more gabble about him."

There was no more gabble about him that they heard of at least. But there was a careful watch kept upon the puzzling quartette by all Dillsborough.

It happened one day that Mrs. Powers (always on the alert to please her nephew, and keep him from carrying that threat of his to break up the Court into execution) asked the two Miss Carlises to join at a shooting luncheon on the side of a well-wooded cover. These three were the only ladies present; but there were six guns out, and therefore it was easy enough for the four, who had grown to like each other so well, to get together a little apart from the group around Mrs. Powers. As is usual with girls who have no brothers, the Carlises were always ready to regret the fact of having none. "If we had one of us been a boy instead of a girl, mamma would have had something to totter against for support, and wouldn't have fallen so utterly prone as she has fallen now," Harty had often said. This morning, after looking for a long time at the fine stalwart-looking group of young sportsmen who were lounging around, she broke the silence by saying:

"I always wish we had had brothers; but I wish it more than ever when I see men hunting, or shooting, or riding races, or doing anything manly; have you a brother, Mr. Ferrier?"

Jack Ferrier's face saddened instantly;

but he answered with a certain reliance on her sympathy, which touched her infinitely:

"I had a brother—the dearest young fellow in the world; I'll tell you his story one day, Miss Carlisle! Poor Frank!"

"For Heaven's sake don't tell her his story," Claude struck in with "angry, uncalled-for energy," it seemed to Harty. And she, looking at him in surprise, saw that his face had blanched, and his brow contracted, to a degree that altered his face in a way she had never seen it alter before.

"Why, Claude?" she whispered. "What is it?" And then she drew a little nearer to him, and murmured, "You tell me, will you?"

"No, no, Harty; I hate repeating painful stories, when the repetition of them can do no good to any human being, and may possibly do harm. Jack is rather open-mouthed, good fellow as he is; don't you ask him to tell you anything about his brother, there's a darling."

Harty looked at him thoughtfully.

"If he doesn't mind telling me, why should you mind my hearing it; you have made me wish to know now so much. I can't promise, Claude, because I know I should break my promise, and say, 'Do tell me about your brother, do, do,' the instant I had the opportunity."

"I can't understand Jack liking to introduce the subject," Claude muttered, in an annoyed tone.

"Was he murdered?" Harty questioned, feeling utterly unable to resist the fascination of the mystery which Claude had most unwittingly and unadvisedly thrown over the subject. "Was he murdered? Frank Ferrier! what a pretty name."

"His name wasn't—never mind his name, or his story, poor boy; why should you," he continued unreasonably, "be interested in the fate of a man you never knew, when I tell you that you had better not hear it?"

"That's so unsatisfactory, Claude," she laughed; "and of course I'm interested in the fate of Mr. Ferrier's brother; how fond he must have been of him; did you see how that nice, bright face of his clouded and saddened in an instant when he spoke of him."

"Ferrier's the best fellow in the world," Claude said slowly and irrelevantly.

"I don't know about being the best," Harty responded, thoughtfully, they had sauntered a little away apart from the others; "but I should think he was one of the pluckiest, frankest, least selfish fellows in the world."

"You seem to have been studying his character, Harty," he said, in a slightly piqued tone.

"I suppose I have unconsciously," she answered, cheerfully, turning round under the shade of a tree to look back at the group lounging in the open. "I suppose I have unconsciously, for I seem to know all about him, and to understand him pretty well; look how earnestly he is talking to Mab, now; oh dear! supposing another complication should arise in our wretched family; supposing he should fall in love with Mab, and then have to sheer off because of Mr. Devenish; but somehow or other I don't think he would."

She muttered the last words very softly, her eyes still fixed on the fair frank-faced man now talking so eagerly to her sister. And Claude, watching her, felt a pang for which he did not care to account.

"Would what?" he asked. "Don't you think that he would fall in love with Mabel, or don't you think he would 'sheer off,' as you call it, because of Mr. Devenish?"

Just as he spoke, Jack Ferrier, catching Harty's glance, sprang up from the ground, and came over to join them, and Harty had only time to say:

"I don't think he would do either—I'm sure he wouldn't do the last." And again Claude experienced a pang, for which he was utterly at a loss to account.

He nearly traced the source of it, perhaps, as Jack came up, his gaze bent in eager admiration on Harty's face (it was one of her minutes of looking pretty), and his whole manner expressing that desire to be near her, which no man who really feels it for a woman can conceal.

"He is getting fond of her," Claude thought, in a rage. "And she tells me she is only faithful to me because she has not been tempted! She's too good to let him connect himself with Devenish, though, when once she knows the cause of poor Frank's death, and she'll get that out of him in ten minutes."

The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND is reserved by the Authors.